

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1462

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AG, LY

SUBJECT: CLOSER ALGERIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS

REF: ALGIERS 3780

1. IT APPEARS TO US THAT QADHAFI'S MEETING WITH BOUMEDIENE AT AN ALGERIAN MILITARY BASE IS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN A LONG PROCESS OF RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WHICH GOES BACK TO LATE 1974. RELATIONS WERE COLD BETWEEN THE TWO MEN AFTER BOUMEDIENE'S HOSTILE REACTION TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIBYAN-TUNISIAN UNITY IN JANUARY, 1974, AND IN RETROSPECT THE FIRST SIGN OF REAL IMPROVEMENT WAS LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER AL-HUNI'S STATEMENT IN A NOVEMBER, 1974, INTERVIEW THAT A QADHAFI-BOUMEDIENE MEETING WAS IN THE WORKS. JALLUD REPRESENTED QADHAFI AT THE FUNERAL OF ALGERIAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR M'DEGHRI IN NOVEMBER, 1974, AND APPARENTLY MADE A PITCH FOR BETTER RELATIONS. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY LIBYAN
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MINISTER OF INTERIOR AL-HUMAH'S TRIP TO ALGIERS

LAST DECEMBER, AND IN JANUARY ALGERIAN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER DRAYA CAME HERE. THE BARRAGE OF ANTI-SADAT PROPAGANDA FROM TRIPOLI IN THE SPRING OF 1975 PRESUMABLY DELAYED MATTERS SOMEWHAT, BUT JALLAD SAW BOUMEDIENE IN ALGIERS IN JUNE, AND IN JULY BOUMEDIENE STOPPED IN TRIPOLI AND MANAGED TO CONVINCE QADHAFI TO FLY WITH HIM TO THE OAU SUMMIT IN KAMPALA. QADHAFI WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL AFFAIRS AFTER THE MUHAYSHI CONSPIRACY IN AUGUST, BUT ON DECEMBER 11, BOUMEDIENE VISITED HIM IN HIS TRIBAL HOME AT SIRTE, AFTER QADHAFI'S APPARENT DECISION TO SUPPORT BOUMEDIENE IN HIS CONFRONTATION WITH MOROCCO BY SENDING SOVIET MADE TANKS TO ALGERIA. IN SHORT, THE GROUND WAS WELL-PREPARED FOR THIS LATEST MEETING.

2. AS REFTTEL POINTS OUT, THE TWO MEN MUST HAVE DISCUSSED THE SAHARA SITUATION AND WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF QADHAFI HAD NOT AGREED TO CONTINUE TO SEND BOUMEDIENE SOVIET MATERIAL IN HIS POSSESSION, FOR WHICH HE HAS NO USE IN ANY CASE, AND WHICH HE IS HAVING A HARD TIME EVEN MAINTAINING IN MOTHBALLS. IN RETURN, HE GOT ALGERIAN AGREEMENT ON THE UNITARIAN LANGUAGE SO DEAR TO HIM. THE VERSION OF THE COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED HERE (AND IT APPEARS TO DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM THE VERSION CARRIED BY RADIO ALGIERS REPORTED BY FBIS) SPEAKS OF "THE INEVITABILITY OF A COMMON DESTINY" (NOT A "SIMILAR" DESTINY) AND OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES TO "SOLIDIFY THE INTEGRAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM", ALSO, "A TIME-TABLE FOR FUTURE PERIODIC MEETINGS WAS AGREED UPON".

3. WE PRESUME THAT THE CLOSER ALGERIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS WHICH THE COMMUNIQUE APPEARS TO HERALD WILL BE BAD NEWS IN CAIRO, RABAT, TUNIS, AND NOUAKCHOTT. IN RABAT IN PARTICULAR, IT CAN PRESUMABLY ONLY BE READ AS CLOSING THE CHAPTER OF THE MOROCCAN-LIBYAN "RAPPROCHEMENT" EVEN THOUGH QADHAFI CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A PUBLIC POSITION OF NEUTRALITY ON THE MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN DISPUTE OVER THE SAHARA. THE MAURITANIANS HAVE APPARENTLY NOT DESPAIRED, HOWEVER, SINCE THE MAURITANIAN FOREIGN CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTER HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF TRIPOLI TWICE IN RECENT DAYS. HE MET WITH QADHAFI ON DECEMBER 30, IMMEDIATELY AFTER QADHAFI'S RETURN FROM HASSI MESSAOUD.
CARLE

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